

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 8 are canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer to gain allowance of the application. The pending claims are claims 5-7, 9-16 and 19-23. The Examiner's indication of allowed subject matter is appreciated. The undersigned thanks Examiner Crane for the courtesies extended during the telephone interview conducted on October 24, 2003.


The Office Action Summary Sheet states that claims 1-21 are currently pending in the application. However, claims 17 and 18 were canceled in the Amendment dated April 21, 2003. In addition, claims 22 and 23 were added in the Amendment of April 2, 2001, and were acknowledged by the Examiner in the November 20, 2002 Office Action. Since claims 22 and 23 depend from claim 13, which has been allowed, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 22 and 23 should also be allowed. Acknowledgment of the same by the Office is respectfully requested.

The Office Action includes a rejection of claims 1-4 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over the Hatakoshi et al. patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,400,742), in view of the Nagahama et al. patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,172,382). Claims 1-4 and 8 have been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer to gain allowance of the application. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing remarks, withdrawal of the rejection of record and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Should there be any questions in connection with this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,
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